



SERVICE INSIGHT

Interview with:

Jörg Heiden, process engineer at Leistritz

The lockdown at the beginning of 2020 confronted our service with a whole new set of challenges. Technicians were recalled from foreign assignments and on-site operations were kept to a minimum. Although many production plants around the world were shut down for a while, some new plants were still to be commissioned.

Initial situation

This was also the case for one of our customers in Russia. The two ZSE 60 & 87 MAXX extruders of a PET recycling line were already delivered and installed at the beginning of 2020. However, due to the lockdown, all technicians then had to be withdrawn and commissioning could not be carried out as planned. However, since the customer did not want to lose any time, the two extruders had to go into production promptly. "Also the idea of working with an external service provider on site could not be realized," says Jörg Heiden, commissioning engineer at Leistritz.

Challenge

So, after lengthy discussions with the customer, we agreed to perform the commissioning remotely from a distance. "The technical prerequisites for this were in place, but it was still a big challenge, both for us and the customer," explains Jörg Heiden. "Fortunately, the plant operator on site had already been present during the installation and was thus already somewhat familiar with the plant. We then gave him precise instructions via video and audio transmission."

Result

The communication with the customer's personnel worked very well and so the two extruders were commissioned without any problems. Production started well and both sides are satisfied with the result.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the first remote start-up has shown that this is a viable alternative that has definitely helped us and our customers to maintain service activities in times of crisis. Furthermore, we have created another possibility to satisfy our customers remotely in the future.

FIVE QUESTIONS TO JÖRG HEIDEN:

■ **Jörg, as one of our most experienced commissioning engineers, you performed the first remote commissioning for Leistritz. What was that like for you?**

Actually the same as usual, except that this time I couldn't do it myself, but had to give more instructions.

■ **We know that our extruders can be commissioned remotely. But what are the requirements for this?**

First and foremost, we need the remote maintenance tool of our control system, which allows us to bring the HMI interfaces to our headquarters. Of course, all other controls integrated in the network can also be operated via this.

■ **Does this mean that we can simply connect to all extruders worldwide from Nuremberg and control them?**

Of course it's not that simple! Security is of paramount importance. That is why the secure VPN tunnel can only be opened (and closed again) from the customer's side.

■ **What are the advantages for the customer compared to an on-site commissioning?**

Since the line operator performs the final assembly himself and also tests it afterwards when the line is started up, he gains a much more intensive insight into the handling of the extruder and can thus also react better in trouble shooting cases.

■ **That almost sounds as if remote commissioning is very easy to carry out?**

Yes, it does sound that way. But for the customer and for us, the effort is significantly greater. Depending on the size and scope of the extruder, many steps have to be completed in advance before the extruder can even be started. For this, we do not accept any compromises for our systems, even with remote commissioning.

